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Annular eclipse excitement rising in Costa Rica

From : Daniel Fischer <dfischer@astro.uni-bonn.de> To : SOLARECLIPSES@AULA.COM Date : Sun, 9 Dec 2001 00:46:36 +0100 (MET)

I've been in Costa Rica for less than 24 hours, but here in San Jose there have already been quite a number of eclipse-related encounters:

- the English-language weekly Tico Times of Dec. 7 had long eclipse stories, including reports about eclipse superstitions among their own editors (like pregnant women planning to stay home);
- La Nacion had a long report about Olivier Staiger's public talk here in San Jose in the Dec. 7 edition;
- there are eclipse posters and offers of (too expensive!) eclipse glasses in some places in the city;
- in a restaurant we saw a guy with a Planetary Society T-shirt whom we asked about the amateur astronomical scene in Costa Rica; we learned that our fellow amateurs there dread the weather but that he owns a small refractor and that his company (a software business) was going to Guanacaste for a few days to watch the eclipse.

That it for now - if there are similarly good and cheap web connections in other places in CR, too (I'm ssh-ing from a Linux system, and it's only 80 U.S. cents for the hour), there could be more. Daniel Fischer (no possibility to correct typos, sorry ...)

Solar Eclipse on Friday? No Big Deal in NYC!

From : Skywayinc@aol.com To : eclipse@hydra.carleton.ca Date : Mon, 10 Dec 2001 00:15:27 EST

As many of you know, there is going to be a partial solar eclipse next Friday. For many folks, however, the magnitude of this event will be very small . . . and in some areas, there will not be any eclipse at all.

It will be interesting to see how the news media covers this event, since in the minds of most laypersons, the two words "solar eclipse" seems to imply a rare and awe-inspiring event in the making. Even yesterday, in the sports section of the NY Daily News, sports columnist Bill Madden was commenting on how infrequently the Mets and Yankees swap players ("It happens about every six years; as frequently as a solar eclipse").

On March 7, 1951, a rather small partial solar eclipse occurred over New York City. In fact, it was to be the very first solar eclipse ever to be televised nationally (on the NBC childrens show, "Howdy Doody"). Yet, conversely, the head of the Hayden Planetarium put out a plea to the news media not to publicize it very much. Here is the story EXACTLY as it appeared in The New York Times for Wednesday, March 7, 1951:

SUN IN AN ECLIPSE TODAY, BUT PLEASE, NO PUBLICITY

"Well, yes, there actually is going to be a small eclipse of the sun here Wednesday afternoon," Robert Coles, curator of the Hayden Planetarium, admitted after extensive questioning yesterday. "But please, I ask you, don't get people too excited about it.

"You see," Mr. Coles explained, "if we get people expecting a big show they'll be disappointed. Then they won't pay any attention when we have a genuine celestial wonder to call to their attention."

Today's e - - - - - will start at 5:08 P.M., the curator admitted. The mid-point will be reached at 5:43 and the sun will set in shadow at 5:54. Only 17 percent of the sun's surface in New York City will be obscured at the maximum.

Please keep this quiet. Just as a point of reference, in New York, next Friday's eclipse starts at 4:13 p.m. and ends with the setting of the Sun at 4:28 p.m. The eclipse magnitude will be just .142.

(Wish I lived at least in Hawaii, where the magnitude will be a heftier .830!) -- joe rao

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1**ICSTARS and Klipsi Webcast**

From : Vic & Jen Winter <webmaster@icstars.com> To : SOLARECLIPSES@AULA.COM
 Date : Mon, 10 Dec 2001 01:10:44 +0000

After discussing several options and looking at the weather patterns over the last few days, Olivier Staiger has chosen to focus on a near-live, but not dedicated live web-cast. Weather will be a big concern, mobility will be paramount... and one live image of a possibly clouded over Sun is not his goal.



He feels that a webcam with regularly uploaded images of both the eclipse and the environment with the ability to be mobile for weather will have much more to offer. So the uploads will not be a continuous stream, but rather a collec-



tion of near-live images.

Vic will also have a choice of two Halpha filters, so if all goes well, the two could even offer uploads from the eye-piece!

You can see his webcast with report pictures from one of 3 locations:

www.icstars.com/AstronomicalTours/costarica/

<http://eclipse.span.ch/liveframe.htm>

<http://eclipse.ice.co.cr/>

The ICSTARS.com website will be maintained live with picture updates posted as they become available. Clear Skies, Vic & Jen Winter



From : Jay.M.Pasachoff@williams.edu

I have added links to Vic and Jen Winter's and Olivier Staiger's webcast sites to our webpage at: www.eclipses.info

of the Program Group of the Commission on Education and Development of the International Astronomical Union. Thanks to Steve Martin for his work on this website.

I am enroute today to Costa Rica and hope to see many of my eclipse friends there. Jay Pasachoff

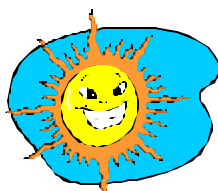
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Dec. 14 solar eclipse, beginning

less than an hour to
go to annularity...

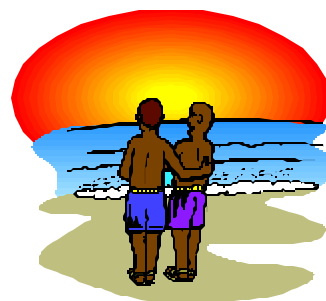
Dec. 14, almost annular eclipse...



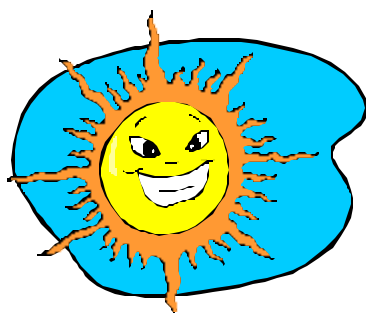
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Dec. 14, from Punta Leona , Costa Rica



annular eclipse, Punta Leona



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1**Image From GOES -West During Annular Eclipse**

From : Michael Gill <eclipsechaser@yahoo.com> To : "SOLARECLIPSES@AULA.COM"
<SOLARECLIPSES@AULA.COM> Date : Fri, 14 Dec 2001 15:02:12 -0800 (PST)

The effect of the annular eclipse can be seen on the clouds over the Pacific Ocean in satellite images.

If you compare the images obtained on December 13th at 21:30UT with those obtained on December 14th at 21:30UT (when the antumbra was brushing the equator at longitude 120 degrees west) the difference is readily seen.

December 13th: http://www.sat.dundee.ac.uk/pdus/WV/200112132130WV1_g.jpg

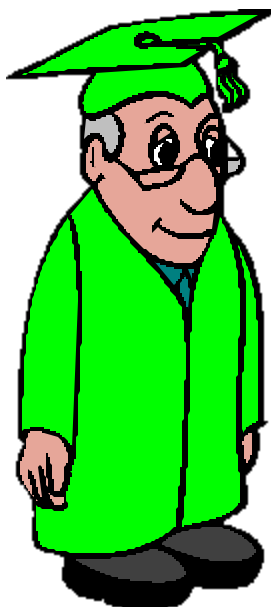
December 14th: http://www.sat.dundee.ac.uk/pdus/WV/200112142130WV1_g.jpg

A GOES-East image taken at 21:00UT (again, when the antumbra was on the equator at about longitude 128 degrees west) can be seen at:

http://www.sat.dundee.ac.uk/pdus/EV/200112142100EV1_g.jpg

If you are unable to view these images then you can register (for free) at: <http://www.sat.dundee.ac.uk/registerql.html>

Michael Gill.



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Annular eclipse

From : "Patrick Poitevin" <patrick_poitevin@hotmail.com>
To : SOLARECLIPSES@AULA.COM Date : Sat, 15 Dec 2001 12:09:49 +0000

From Valentin and Rita Kinet: Subject: annular eclipse
Date: Fri, 14 Dec 2001 23:52:15 +0000

hello, we just saw the annular eclipse. it was not a complete succes but we could see the starting phases through filter and saw the annular phase parttime. we will give more details later when we are home again. it was really amazing to see a partially occulted sundisk setting behind the trees on the horizon. greetings rita and valentin

Anybody else?

From : "Olivier \"Klipsi\" Staiger" <olivier.staiger@span.ch> To : <SOLARECLIPSES@AULA.COM> Date : Sun, 16 Dec 2001 15:45:15 -0600

> <http://www.icstars.com/AstronomicalTours/costarica/>

howdy, Klipsi is back in Geneva now. Looooon flight ! got a few pix at <http://eclipse.span.ch/liveshow.htm> , too.

it is cold, -2°C here. I prefer by far the 24°C of San José :-)

I have a question: Vic Winter and I are very, very, VERY, happy that we saw the annular eclipse. We drove to the southern limit on the Pacific Coast, just a mile or tow north of Herradura beach, at a place and hotel-resort called Punta Leona. We had strong rain suddenly , before the eclipse started, and still lots of clouds for first contact. But we decided to stay there and wait. And I even did a little prayer for clear skies. Did it work ? Yes ! 5 minutes after first contact we started seeing the Sun and it was getting better and better. Annular phase was perfect (actually, too few clouds , filter was needed :-). We did not see Venus, nor Mercury, nor Vega. Temperature was hardly cooler, as humidity was near 100% . It got a slightly bit darker, but not overwhelming. But the grazing (southern limit) asymmetric ring was a dream.

But I start feeling uncomfortable about it: are we the only ones who saw annularity ??? As far as I understand, most folks in Nosara area were clouded out. What about Daniel Fischer ? He was supposed to be near northern limit, in Santa Rosa area , right ? Daniel, have you got nice pictures to share ? Dave Dunham of IOTA , also on northern limit ? any reports ? To all of those who did not see it, my heartfelt sympathy. Hope you'll be more lucky on June 10. Merry

Christmas to all. Klipsi

From : "Jean-Paul GODARD" <jean-paul.godard@noos.fr>

You are Right! We were with Fred at Playas Nosara Hotel and we had no view on the annularity! We are just returning today and I will set up a more complete report on our website after we fully recovered from the trip. Cordialement, Martine & Jean-Paul, tlouzeau@noos.fr jean-paul.godard@noos.fr

ASE2001 from Costa Rica

From : FRED ESPENAK <u32fe@lepvax.gsfc.nasa.gov> To : SOLARECLIPSES@AULA.COM Date : Mon, 17 Dec 2001 14:59:06 -0400

I brought a group of 15 people to Costa Rica for last Friday's annular solar eclipse. We stayed two nights along the Pacific coast in the small town of Nosara.

The night before the eclipse, we enjoyed clear dark skies and a wonderful display of Geminid meteors which were peaking that evening. Of course, they weren't as spectacular as the awesome Leonid storm I saw and photographed from Australia in November (<http://www.mreclipse.com/Meteors/Leo01FE.html>).

If only that great weather would hold! Early on eclipse day, sunshine was interrupted by occasional periods of clouds. We watched the skies with growing apprehension as the conditions deteriorated throughout the morning.

Alejandra León-Castellá and the Costa Rican agency CIENTEC pulled off an impressive publicity campaign to inform and educate the public about the eclipse and how to observe it safely. They ran several newspaper inserts in the days preceding the eclipse and made posters, postcards and solar filters available for sale throughout the country. I was delighted to meet with Alejandra the week before the eclipse. Thanks to her most generous invitation, my group joined hers at the Nosara Beach Hotel on eclipse day. It was a wonderfully unique property from which to observe the event. Although the hotel is undergoing extensive renovation, it offered a commanding view of the Pacific Ocean. Since the hotel was hand selected by Alejandra and CIENTEC, it was also the focus of local television crews, CNN Espanol, a live web cast and many news reporters. The place was a hotbed of activity on eclipse day which lead to a festive atmosphere.

Unfortunately, the weather was quite uncooperative. By the time of second contact (15:10 local time), the sky was completely overcast and we experienced several short, light rain showers. As the minutes passed by, anxious eyes searched the heavens for any possible breaks in the cloud deck or for possible clearing trends heading our

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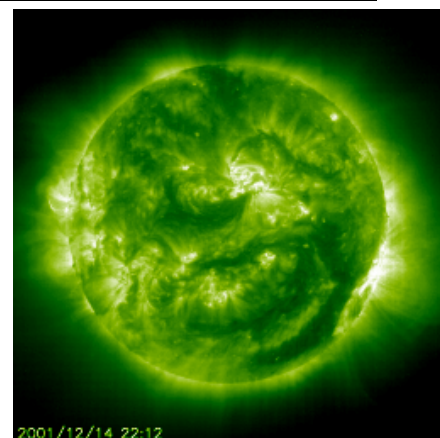
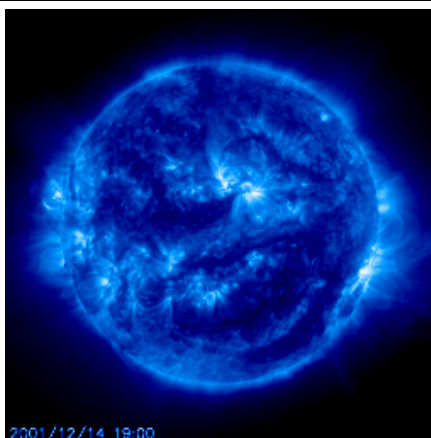
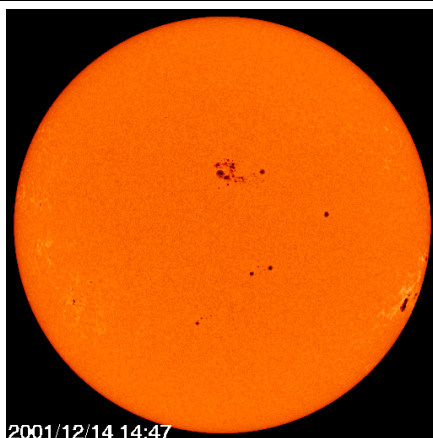
way. At about 3:45 PM, the Sun popped out into a large hole and the crowd roared its approval. I quickly aligned my refractors and video camcorder on the Sun and made some focusing adjustments. I could see some nice sunspot groups as the eclipse magnitude approached 50%. While shooting some video, the clouds grew thick and the Sun disappeared once more from sight.

This was the last we saw of the Sun for the rest of the afternoon. We caught a quick view of the narrow crescent on somebody's pocket television several minutes before annularity. Thus, we knew that there were clear skies somewhere in Costa Rica. They just weren't anywhere near us!

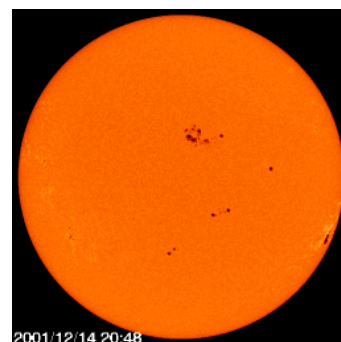
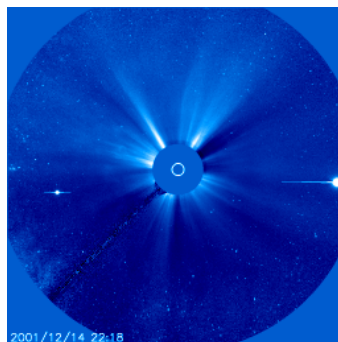
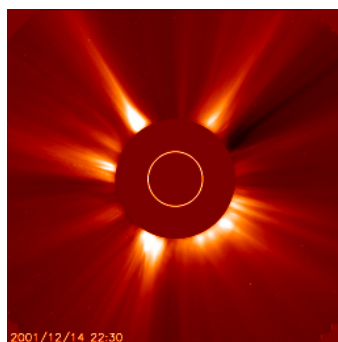
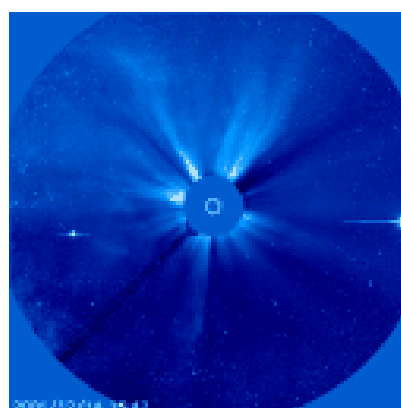
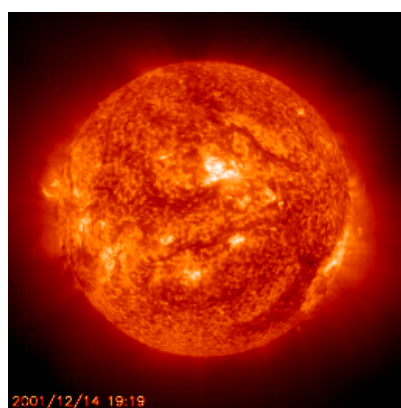
The sky was noticeably darker in the twenty minutes surrounding annularity. Between annularity and sunset, the sky brightened up a bit and we could see patches of blue sky high above us. Refusing to pack up our equipment, we stubbornly waited for the predicted time of sunset to pass just in case a miracle might occur. None did, but we still had a wonderful trip to Costa Rica and were charmed by its natural beauty.

Best of all, we made some wonderful new friends.

Now it's time to start planning for Puerto Vallarta (2002 Jun) and Africa (2002 Dec)! - Fred Espenak



SOHO on the day !



ASE 2001

Costa Rica eclipse report

From : Evan Zucker <ez@AbacusTotality.com> To : SOLARECLIPSES@AULA.COM Date : Fri, 14 Dec 2001 16:08:24 -0800

It doesn't look like they had much of a view of the eclipse from Costa Rica. Here's the latest report from <http://www.tourism-costarica.com/eclipse/webcast.htm>:

3 PM update (4 PM Eastern, 1PM Pacific) The sun has been peeking through the clouds from time to time and we've been able to capture the sun. The eclipse does not officially begin for another half hour and we have still another hour and a half to maximum coverage. Our survey of the horizon gives us hope that we will have relatively clear skies for at least part of the eclipse.

Despite their optimism, the only eclipse photos they have posted at <http://www.tourism-costarica.com/eclipse/2.htm> are from long before annularity. It appears they did not see anything around the time of maximum eclipse, and the live photo shows nothing but clouds as sunset approaches.

Let's hope the Puerto Vallarta has better weather on June 10. -- EVAN

From : "76630,2206" <76630.2206@compuserve.com>

Sorry to read that. What was forecast to be a decent chance of seeing something somewhere in Indiana turned out to be cold rain. So, I still do not have an image of a partial solar eclipse on the horizon.

The Geminids were clouded out. Let's see if the skies clear to reveal something of an aurora tonight (after the X6 flare yesterday). -Robert B Slobins

Costa Rican report

From : Jay.M.Pasachoff@williams.edu To : solareclipses@aula.com Date : Sat, 15 Dec 2001 13:09:31 -0500

Jay, Naomi, and Deborah Pasachoff travelled to the Pacific Coast of the state of Guanacaste in Costa Rica, joining a group from the University of Costa Rica headed by Prof. Jorge Paez and including Rodrigo Carboni and Juan Jose Valverde as well as about 50 others. They were directly on the centerline in the small town of Ostional, a few km north of Nosara. The weather was the worst of the week, with heavy clouds forming after sunrise and remaining for the day.

The clouds parted sufficiently to see first contact at 3:12 pm and the eclipse remained visible for another 10 minutes or so. The partially eclipsed sun was again visible about 20 per cent, 40 per cent, and 80 per cent of the way, for about 2 minutes each time. Then the clouds closed in completely for the duration of the day, through sunset.

The site was about 50 miles south of Playa Flamingo, where Dennis di Cicco took his famous compound annular photo that was published on the cover of Sky and Telescope in 1974 and that has been widely reproduced. That eclipse was in December 1973, when Dennis was working with us at Williams College before he went to work for Sky & Telescope. Jay Pasachoff, Williams College, currently at Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics Chair, International Astronomical Union Working Group on Eclipses

Eclipse live right now

From : "Dale Ireland" <direland@drdale.com> To : "Solar Eclipse List" <SOLARECLIPSES@AULA.COM> Date : Fri, 14 Dec 2001 12:51:48 -0800 : solar eclipse right now on my webcam <http://www.drdaile.com/cam> Dale Ireland

From : Evan Zucker <ez@AbacusTotality.com> : You had a better view than we did in San Diego. The latest "mostly cloudy, 10% chance of precip" forecast turned out to be completely cloudy and a bunch of rain. Oh, well -- I'd rather save my good weather luck for June 10, when San Diego will have the best view in the United States. Evan H. Zucker San Diego, California

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1**More almost live web casts- Annular Eclipse**

From : Alejandra León-Castellá <leonale@racsa.co.cr> To : SOLARECLIPSES@AULA.COM Date : Wed, 12 Dec 2001 20:53:33 -0600

Dear eclipse enthusiasts, Following you will find an update regarding our activities here in Costa Rica. The weather in the central plateau has become unusually cloudy and even rainy. But the forecast calls for better skies for the days to come.

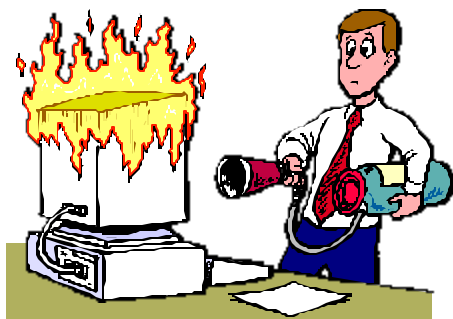
CIENTEC has helped a couple of groups who will be watching from different sites. Daniel Fisher and his group, Don Higgins (USA) and various Belgians will be staying at the northern limit, within the Santa Rosa National Park and Playa Naranjo. Olivier Staiger is going to stay at the southern limit and probably will be close to the Pacific coast around Playa Herradura. Our group and some others, including Fred Espenak's, will be staying close to the central line, in Nosara Beach.

It is the end of the educational campaign and we are happy to see the outcomes: Lately our 2 inserts came out and were distributed nationwide in the largest Newspaper "La Nación". You can find the webversion here: http://nacion.com/ln_ee/ESPECIALES/eclipse/home.html A conference prior to the eclipse, tomorrow morning in Liberia, will be presented by Daniel Fisher and Klaus Loechel (Germany). The same Liberian leader is organizing a Dec. 14th program to attract locals to the park, interact with them in the morning and observe the eclipse in the afternoon. It will be like a

great fair.

Finally, we have added one more link to our list of live and "almost" web casts. And we hope all these attempts will reach you. <http://cientec.or.cr/astronomia/eclipse/english.html>

Tomorrow very early, our group leaves to Nosara and we won't be able to communicate again until Sunday. Wish us some clear skies. Alejandra

**Pix of Eclipse just in**

From : Vic & Jen Winter <webmaster@icstars.com> CC : SOLARECLIPSES@AULA.COM Date : Sat, 15 Dec 2001 00:14:57 +0000

Hello, All! I just uploaded the new pictures from The ANNULAR ECLIPSE from Klipsi and Vic, just in with a recent report! They had Clear Skies long enough for annularity!

<http://www.icstars.com/AstronomicalTours/costarica/>

Be sure to refresh your screen to see the latest contents of the frames. Clear Skies, Jen Winter - Owner (913) 432-4636

SE Pretty Parial

From : "barr derry" <dbarr@nque.com> To : <SOLARECLIPSES@AULA.COM> Date : Sat, 15 Dec 2001 16:45:20 -0600

We observed the partial eclipse from the campus of the North Platte, Nebraska, High School, inviting students, faculty and all other interested persons to share the observations. 3 viewing instruments were employed: 11X80 binoculars with mylar filters, a 90mm ETX and a C8, both being equipped with TO solar filters. The ETX was additionally burdened with the task of photographing the passage of the eclipse. Rainbow Symphony "eclipse shades" left over from Christmas 2000 were also available for viewing as well as discount sale for the more interested. Hopes to project the solar image through a 60mm refractor were abandoned in the final planning stages when designs for an unremovable rear projection screen proved unacceptable and it became apparent that the "safest" way to view the eclipse presented the easiest way for someone to inadvertently directly view a magnified image of the sun. 200+ individuals took advantage of the viewing opportunity, and most seemed quite pleased with what they saw. Weather besides providing relatively clear skies for the bulk of the eclipse, also dealt us one of those rare warm mid December days that delude us into foolishly thinking that neither Phoenix nor San Diego can really be much better than this. From our location the eclipse was a very minor event with a maximum magnitude of slightly less than .15. Regardless, 1st contact at 20:55 UT was exciting because it reminded me of other similar instances that had led to totality. Having experienced totality several times before, I find the beginning of even a partial eclipse an event that stirs a whole host of memories and awakens future promises. Besides, it also provides an excellent opportunity to practice observational and photographic skills. Moments before maximum eclipse at 21:43 and until 22:09, clouds fairly well interrupted our viewing endeavors. During this interval I attempted several unfiltered photographs at various short exposure settings through the ETX. We will see about those. Most students who witnessed their first encounter with celestial mechanics through this eclipse were amazed at what they saw but disappointed that the path of the moon did not pass directly across the sun. They wanted to know when they

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(Continued from page 29)

could see the complete thing. "In only 16 years," I told them, a total eclipse will sweep over North Platte." I could see in their faces that I might as well as said in 1600 years, for when you are 16, 16 is a lifetime. Glad to hear and see that at least some of those who traveled to Costa Rica were able to successfully observe the eclipse. As Evan pointed out, reports from the area mostly indicated prospects would not be good. Let me join in with the general wish for better prospects next June 10 for the Puerto Vallarta area. Hope to see many of you there. Derryl Barr

From : "John Leppert" <johnleppert@peoplepc.com>

Friends, Here in sunny, snowless, balmy North Dakota, my son and I viewed a very partial eclipse Friday afternoon in a mostly clear sky and in light jacket (+6C) temperatures. We also used a 90mm ETX along with a TO filter for the 7.5% maximum that occurred locally at 15:34:19 CST (21:34:19 UT). As my son said, "It's a teaser after Zambia's 6 months ago." There were some every nice sunspot groupings. Would that Costa Rica might have had our sky... John Leppert Bismarck ND

ASE 2002

ASA 2002

From : Glenn Schneider <gschneider@mac.com> To : SOLARECLIPSES@AULA.COM Date : Mon, 03 Dec 2001 14:53:11 - 0700

What? You are not going to Tinian? ;-)

Note that for this eclipse, of course, to get it at true "sunset" atmospheric refraction is important. To first order, mid-eclipse at sunset on centerline occurs at 104.27W, 19.57N when you consider "typical" refractive indices for sea-level at subtropical latitudes. This is 66km SE of mid-eclipse centerline sunset without a refractive correction - so it is further inland. Still, annularity a very small distance above a water horizon is an appealing idea. (Centerline hits the Mexican coast at 105.32W, 20.01N, south of Puerto Villarta).

As you know I normally "don't do annulars", but I have to agree that a Sunset annular, particularly over water viewed from land could be pretty neat. I am starting to think about it "seriously", and if you and/or Craig are going to do this, I might like to join or meet up with you. Getting there should be very easy, and I would do this as a quick trip - flying into Puerta Villarta or Guadalaharra on June 9th and back home on June 11. Glenn Schneider



4 DEC 2002 ECLIPSE FROM SOUTH AUSTRALIA

From : "Odille Esmonde-Morgan" <analog6@ozemail.com.au> To : <SOLARECLIPSES@AULA.COM> Date : Mon, 3 Dec 2001 12:21:53 +1100

Dear All, I am canvassing if anyone would be interested in a train trip (utilising sleeper cars) from Canberra via Sydney to view the 4 December 2002 eclipse.

I am a member of our local railway society (all volunteers) and we run long-distance trips. I am going to put a proposal to tomorrow's Tour's Committee meeting to see if we can organise a trip to view the eclipse. We would not be going into Ceduna, as there is no rail link with the main line, but would view from the centreline between it falls just about midway between Wirraminna and Coondambo, on the Trans-Continental rail route. Those of you who have Fred Espenak's excellent book for this eclipse can find it as Figure 15 on page 47. Preliminary costings would put costs somewhere in the region of \$1,700- 2,500 (Australian \$). The Canberra Astronomical Society have already expressed interest for possibly 15-20 of their members.

On our long-distance trips all meals (cooked on board by our chef from fresh produce) are supplied, plus motel accommodation and transfers where required, and you only pay for off-train meals. We will probably offer an alternative of a winery tour for those partners who may not wish to travel to the Eclipse - they would offload and travel by coach with perhaps one night in a motel depending upon itineraries. As I understand all accommodation in Ceduna is booked out, this will provide an alternative. The cars used are air-conditioned twinettes (sleep 2) with your own shower and toilet, or roomettes (sleep 1) with facilities at each end of the carriages. We also have non-air-conditioned cars, for a cheaper rate, but December in central Australia will be very hot. so only consider this if you like the heat.

We would also be interested in having someone as 'eclipse-master' to guide viewers etc and give talks etc pre and possibly post eclipse. We have a dance car which could be converted to a 'theatrette venue for slide shows etc pre-eclipse.

Any replies to me personally please, to avoid clogging up the list. The Society's web site is www.arhs.org.au for those interested, with long-distance trips at <http://www.arhsact.org.au/tours.html#longdist>.

Odille Esmonde-Morgan, Canberra, Australia

Zimbabwe Eclipse 2002

From : Kidinvs@aol.com To : SOLARECLIPSES@aula.com Date : Mon, 10 Dec 2001 11:01:57 EST

For those of you that have interest on conditions in Zimbabwe for the Dec. 4th, 2002 TSE, I have just returned from a weeks stay there to do the planning for the next eclipse tour. Specifics will soon be posted on my website, www.eclipsesafaris.com. However, in the meantime, let me inform you of some of the things to expect there. Zimbabwe in December is much different than it was in June. My time was spent in Harare (1 day), Victoria Falls (3 days), Bulawayo (1 day), and the area that I will view the eclipse from, just to the north of Beitbridge (2 days). Weather... In all of these locals, the weather was very similar from day to day. The temperatures in the day reached about 85 degrees and felt like it in the sun. There was a breeze almost every day, that made shady areas quite comfortable. Night time temps were between 65-70 degrees. I was told from the locals that the morning cloudiness I experienced on 4 of the 6 mornings was very unusual. On 2 of the 6 mornings I was there, 2 were 20% cloud cover, and would have allowed good eclipse viewing. 2 of the mornings would have allowed viewing with mobility.... and 2 mornings would have been a washout with 100% cloud cover for as far as the eye could see. The locals insist that morning cloudiness is very unusual. The rest of the day varies from clouds to clear skies, with a thunderstorm passing at some point of the day. If you are in an area providing an unlimited view, you will always see a thunderstorm building somewhere in the distance. The rains are short, and move quickly. Night time sky viewing will be disappointing to those in Zimbabwe last June. I did not have a single evening that would rival every night last June. Only 1 night was clear enough to really enjoy a skyshow. The humidity, while much higher than in June, is not uncomfortable. The lodges located in the bush areas are NOT air conditioned, and on 1 night, I found it a bit difficult to fall asleep with the humidity. All other nights were fine for sleeping, with temps at 3am feeling like close to 60 degrees. There

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were more insects than in June, but present no problem in the daytime. Early evening will require insect repellent to carry you through the dusk period. I did get about 8 mosquito bites in the 6 nights I spent there. I used Malarone for malaria with no side effects, just like in June. The official rate for the US\$/ZIM\$ is still 55/1 The street rate in June was 130/1 It is now 310/1 !!! This is very sad for the locals, but it makes everything in Zimbabwe almost seem like free to people with access to any Forex. Elections are to take place in March.. in the meantime, I never felt threatened, in danger, or uncomfortable. The cost for a visa for US citizens is still \$30 for single entry. The departure tax has been raised to \$20 US. There is a concerted effort by the Govt there to facilitate the huge influx of tourists for the 2002 eclipse. As they were underprepared for 2001, they are all ready gearing up for 2002. I think they will be a bit disappointed by the number of tourists that come in 2002. I for one, certainly think there will be less people going. In a nutshell, if you are not sure about going, I will make this suggestion..... BY ALL MEANS... GO TO ZIMBABWE. Anyone with specific questions, contact me directly as not to tie up the SENL. Eric Brown

From : "76630,2206" <76630.2206@compuserve.com>

Eric: What type of cloud cover was it--Convective, high-clouds, or stratiform? I did notice that Southern Africa along the eclipse path looked lousy more often than not. Mocambique would have offered the best chances.

From discussions with South Africans from Jo'burg, they seem to concur with the natives you met: the mornings are generally good. I had similar results in Indonesia--18 March 1988 was a rainy day, but the intense rain came at a convenient time, 2:00 PM, when we had to run to the plane on our return. At our location on centerline, the sun rose behind a thunderhead, but with 30 minutes to go, that CB disappeared and we saw totality through what can best be described as broken cirrus that was invisible in my images of totality (but saved my images because my relatively cheap 400 mm lens was not well-baffled).

How much mobility is there in Zimbabwe? You can do 50 (80 kph) but that was in June, not December.

Also, we have been having abnormal weather (warm) in the Eastern USA. Is there a similar abnormality in this year's pattern?

I do recall that there was a severe drought from 1995-1999 in the region. Why? In 2000, there were floods, especially in Mocambique. We need to know what is being set up.

Finally, I see no problem in people 'tying' up SENL with questions to you. Their questions and your answers will help us all. cheers/Robert B Slobins

From : Kidinvs@aol.com

To answer the questions about weather, lets put it this way, as I am not a weather man.... On the mornings that I had relatively good skies, the clouds were of the nice white puffy type scattered in the sky. These clouds were moving slowly in a predictable fashion. On the mornings that were overcast, these were the solid gray horizon to horizon type that would have totally precluded anyone seeing the eclipse. The road in Zimbabwe that goes north from Beitbridge is in the eclipse path in Zimbabwe for at least 50 Km., and it is a 2 lane road. As long as there is not traffic, or floodwaters, traveling even 80mph is fine. We were driving at 130-140kph. As far as what sort of weather pattern is being set up for the future, i am not the one to ask....sorry Eric Brown www.eclipsesafaris.com

PROPOSED RAIL TOUR - 2002 ECLIPSE

From : "Odille Esmonde-Morgan" <analog6@ozemail.com.au> To : <SOLARECLIPSES@AULA.COM> Date : Wed, 5 Dec 2001 12:33:54 +1100

Dear All, Thanks to those who've replied, I will be getting back to you personally shortly. I have made a page on my website for this eclipse, and will post updates on the viability of the train trip, and hopefully itineraries when finalised. Go to <http://analog6.members.easyspace.com/eclipses.htm>. Odille Esmonde-Morgan Canberra, Australia <http://analog6.members.easyspace.com/analog6@ozemail.com.au>



Joanne & Patrick

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